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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1518  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000294

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SUBJECT: BURMA -- NEW INDONESIAN APPROACH SLOWLY TAKING  
SHAPE

REF: JAKARTA 269 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: A new Indonesian approach regarding Burma is slowly taking shape. Senior GOI officials say they are developing a comprehensive strategy which will address a wide range of concerns re Burma, including the need for a democratic transition, human rights and national integrity. As part of the legislative review of the ASEAN Charter, Indonesian parliamentarians and local experts also continue to examine the issue with a view to how Indonesia, ASEAN and the UN can work to effect change. Indonesians are not at all optimistic that new strategic approaches will work, but agree on the need to continue to press the regime. END SUMMARY.

"COMPREHENSIVE GAME PLAN" NEEDED

12. (C) Burma continues to be an important concern in Indonesia. The GOI is frustrated with the lack of progress in Burma and is looking for a new approach, Desra Percaya, Director for International Security and Disarmament Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU), told the DCM in a recent meeting. In Indonesia's view, the lack of progress stems mainly from two factors:

--No clear regional/international leader: ASEAN members say China's role is key, while China puts the onus on ASEAN. In the meantime, the UN is also in the mix.

--No effective tools: Sanctions and isolation have not prodded the regime to undertake reforms, but neither has ASEAN's "constructive engagement" strategy.

Because of these factors, Percaya noted, Indonesian leaders believe that the international community needs to agree on what FM Wirajuda has called a "comprehensive game plan" for dealing with Burma.

13. (C) The game plan would coordinate the now disparate efforts of the key players on Burma--UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari, ASEAN and China. Not all ASEAN members supported a more active approach, Percaya said, but Indonesia was keen to play a leading role on this issue within the organization

once its plan was developed fully. He said Indonesia would be willing to go ahead with a subset of ASEAN members but did not specify which states those might be.

#### TOUGH TIMES FOR GAMBARI MISSION

14. (C) The DCM noted that despite UN Special Envoy Gambari's best efforts, his mission did not seem to be making any tangible progress. Percaya agreed, and said Indonesia believed the Burmese regime was "using Gambari to deflect pressure" and was not really cooperating with him. Percaya reiterated Indonesia's support for Gambari's mission as part of the international community's approach to the Burma issue.

#### A "THIRD WAY" TAKING SHAPE?

15. (C) As GOI contacts have flagged to us previously, Percaya--together with other current and former GOI officials, academics and think-tank figures--are working on a concept paper which outlines an approach to Burma modeled on the "Cocktail Party Talks" between Cambodia and Vietnam that Indonesia hosted in 1988. Percaya said the working group aimed to finish the concept paper by the middle of February, after which Percaya would seek FM Wirajuda's agreement to adopt the approach. The next hurdle would be to obtain President Yudhoyono's support. Percaya said the President remained very interested in the Burma situation and finding ways to foster change there.

16. (C) Under the still evolving arrangement, Indonesia would invite representatives of the Burmese regime, the NLD and other democratic opposition groups, representatives of Burmese ethnic minority groups and key regional countries for

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informal discussions in Jakarta. The discussions would focus on a broad range of issues, including democracy, human rights, national unity and reconciliation, and economic development. The details are not yet set, Percaya added. While not optimistic that this new approach would work, Percaya reiterated that the GOI felt compelled to try.

17. (C) Percaya suggested that previous approaches to Burma had failed because they focused exclusively on human rights and democracy. This more comprehensive approach, he asserted, could have a better chance of success. The focus on Burma's national unity and a national reconciliation process would work to counter well-known junta claims that Indonesia and other SE Asian states also, in part, subscribed to, i.e., that rapid democratic reform could trigger Burma's break-up as ethnic minority regions went their own way.

#### ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

18. (C) The DCM outlined Mission's plans to work with civil society groups to organize a regional conference on Burma in Jakarta in March (reftel). Percaya said DEPLU officials would be interested in participating. He advised that a closed session would likely attract more GOI participants who would be wary of criticizing a fellow ASEAN member in a public forum. He also said that DEPLU officials would like the opportunity to explain to NGOs and other civil society groups how difficult it was to deal with the regime in Burma. These groups, he said, did not have "a realistic understanding" of how stubborn the Burmese regime was.

#### DPR REMAINS SKEPTICAL

19. (C) Members of the Indonesian legislature (DPR) raised questions about Burma in public hearings on the ASEAN Charter which began on February 4. DPR member Djoko Susilo told poloff on February 8 that some DPR members were concerned that ratifying the Charter with Burma as a signatory would send the wrong signal. Moving ahead would cause many to question the sincerity of ASEAN's commitment to the values of democracy and human rights that were incorporated in the

Charter, according to Susilo. He emphasized that many years had passed without any tangible progress in Burma, and DPR members believed this was no longer acceptable.

¶10. (C) ASEAN experts from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Indonesia's leading foreign affairs think tank, have urged the DPR to use the ratification process to press for change in Burma. Clara Joewono, CSIS's Deputy Executive Director, told poloff that CSIS experts had urged the DPR to press the Yudhoyono administration to support an amendment to the Charter, or at least a Parliamentary reservation. (Note: Article 48 includes a provision allowing any ASEAN member to propose amendments to the Charter.) Joewono said the Charter was watered down because it did not include the strong human rights monitoring and enforcement mechanisms recommended by the Eminent Persons Group.

¶11. (C) Expressing her personal view, albeit one shared by other Indonesian experts, Joewono said the DPR should refrain from ratifying the Charter until the GOI agreed to an amendment reinstating the human rights monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. This step would give ASEAN a more effective tool to press the Burmese regime. She admitted, however, that while efforts to press the DPR could lead to public criticism of Burma, they were unlikely to block the Charter's ratification.

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